

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 PANAMA 06246 01 OF 03 102024Z

64

ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SAB-01 AID-05 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00

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EB-07 LAB-04 SIL-01 OPR-02 /073 W
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O R 101940Z OCT 75

FM AMEMBASSY PANAMA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5406

INFO PANCANAL

USCINCSO

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 3 PANAMA 6246

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PGOV, PN

SUBJECT: ANNIVERSARY OF REVOLUTION-OCTOBER 11TH

REF: PANAMA 4799

SUMMARY: GOP PLANS FOR CELEBRATION OF SEVENTH ANNIVERSARY OF REVOLUTION ON OCTOBER 11TH CENTER AROUND "POPULAR POWER" RALLY, WITH GOVERNMENT PREDICTIONS ON ATTENDANCE NOW WELL OVER 100,000. PLANS INCLUDE CONSIDERABLE ARRAY OF SUBSIDIARY AND RELATED CIVIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL EVENTS. GENERAL THEME WILL BE SOLIDARITY WITH REVOLUTION AND WITH PRESENT GOVERNMENT; CANAL ISSUE WILL HAVE PART IN THIS, AS IN VIRTUALLY ALL GOVERNMENT ACTIVITIES, BUT TO DATE WE SEE NO EFFORT TO USE IT IN HOSTILE MANNER--RATHER, EMPHASIS WILL BE ON AVOIDANCE OF PROVOCATION AND POPULAR SUPPORT OF GOP IN PEACEFUL NEGOTIATION AS BEST MEANS OF SECURING FULL RECOGNITION OF PANAMANIAN SOVEREIGNTY IN ZONE. AS YET, WE HAVE NO INDICATION OF WHAT TORRIJOS WILL SAY TO RALLY, EITHER ON CANAL OR ON DOMESTIC SUBJECTS; ALTHOUGH AIR IS RIFE WITH USUAL RUMORS OF IMPENDING CHANGES IN GOVERNMENT, WE SEE NO LIKELIHOOD OF MAJOR SHIFT IN DIRECTION, EVEN IF SOME
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PAGE 02 PANAMA 06246 01 OF 03 102024Z

FACES CHANGE. EMBASSY ASSESSMENT IS THAT GOP IS SEEKING

TO PROMOTE A FESTIVE ATMOSPHERE FOR THE CELEBRATION OF THE OCTOBER REVOLUTION. AN OVERTLY ANTI-US TONE TO CELEBRATIONS, WHICH MIGHT SET OFF ACTS HOSTILE TO US (AND/OR TO GOP ITSELF) WOULD NOT FIT AT ALL WITH THIS EFFORT; ANY SUCH ACTS WILL THEREFORE BE DISCOURAGED. IN VIEW OF RECENT INTRA-STUDENT CLASHES, HOWEVER, DANGER OF NEW CLASHES BETWEEN PRO AND ANTI-GOP STUDENTS IS CLEAR AS IS POSSIBILITY STUDENTS MAY SEEK TO DISRUPT CELEBRATION. END SUMMARY.

1. SINCE ESTABLISHMENT OF ORGANIZING COMMITTEE REPORTED REFTEL, LOCAL PRESS HAS PROVIDED CONTINUOUS COVERAGE OF EVERY ASPECT OF PLANNING AND MOBILIZATION FOR OCTOBER 11 CELEBRATION OF SEVENTH ANNIVERSARY OF "REVOLUTION" OF 1968. THIS HAS INCLUDED COVERAGE IN ALL PAPERS OF PRESS RELEASES AFTER EVERY MEETING OF ORGANIZING COMMITTEE, IN PANAMA CITY AND ALL AROUND COUNTRY, AND COVERAGE OF ACTIVITIES OF PROVINCIAL COMMITTEES, SUBSIDIARY COMMITTEES IN ALL GOVERNMENT AGENCIES AND ENTERPRISES, MOST CORREGIMIENTOS, AND PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS OR LABOR GROUPS, ALL ACCOMPANIED BY PERIODIC COMMENTARY IN EDITORIAL COLUMNS. PRESS COVERAGE IS BUILDING UP THIS WEEK, AND WE EXPECT THAT IT WILL CONTINUE TO DO SO UNTIL SATURDAY HOLIDAY.

2. CENTER OF CELEBRATION WILL BE "POPULAR POWER" RALLY TO BE HELD AT NUEVO PANAMA GYMNASIUM IN OUTSKIRTS OF CITY; EVEN FORMAL OPENING OF FOURTH REGULAR SESSION OF NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF CORREGIMIENTO REPRESENTATIVES, WHICH WILL TAKE PLACE SAME DAY, IS TAKING BACK SEAT TO "POPULAR POWER" ASPECTS OF THIS RALLY IN PUBLIC COVERAGE. RALLY WILL COMMENCE AT ABOUT 0700, ATTENDANCE HAD ORIGINALLY BEEN ESTIMATED AT 30,000 BUT THIS ESTIMATE WAS REVISED UPWARD TO 70,000 AT BEGINNING OF SEPTEMBER, FOLLOWING SWING THROUGH PROVINCES BY ORGANIZING COMMITTEE, AND WAS THEN INCREASED AGAIN TO 100,000 OR MORE EARLY THIS MONTH. LATEST PUBLISHED ESTIMATES RANGE FROM 116,000 TO 128,000. PRESS COVERAGE HAS INCLUDED CONSTANT SERIES OF EXHORTATIONS TO ATTEND; PLANS ARE BEING MADE TO BRING IN FULL MEMBERSHIP OF NACR AND LEADING FIGURES FROM PROVINCES; STUDENT, LABOR AND OTHER ORGANIZATIONS (INCLUDING PDP, CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 PANAMA 06246 01 OF 03 102024Z

PANAMANIAN COMMUNIST PARTY) ARE BEING URGED TO MOBILIZE MEMBERS TO PARTICIPATE; AND ALL GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES ARE BEING STRONGLY URGED TO ATTEND. EMPHASIS ON PARTICIPATION HAS EXTENDED TO SUCH MEASURES AS VOTE BY COLON PROVINCIAL COUNCIL OF \$100 FOR EACH OF 40 CORREGIMIENTOS IN PROVINCE FOR PUBLICITY AND PREPARATION FOR FESTIVITIES. RALLY AND OTHER ACTIVITIES WILL BE BROADCAST NATIONWIDE ON SPECIAL NETWORK INVOLVING ALL TELEVISION AND MOST RADIO STATIONS IN

PANAMA CITY AND PROVINCES.

3. SCHEDULE OF EVENTS ANNOUNCED BY ORGANIZING COMMITTEE AND VARIOUS SUBSIDIARY AND PROVINCIAL COMMITTEES INCLUDES HOST OF RALLIES, AND OTHER SOCIAL AND CULTURAL EVENTS IN PANAMA CITY AND PROVINCES, BOTH ON OCTOBER 11 HOLIDAY ITSELF AND DURING WEEK OR TEN DAYS LEADING UP TO IT. EVENTS SCHEDULED INCLUDE SUCH THINGS AS ART EXHIBITION ORGANIZED BY OFFICE OF CONTROLLER GENERAL OF REPUBLIC; CELEBRATION OF ANNIVERSARY OF UNIVERSITY OF PANAMA; SERIES OF EXHIBITIONS AND EVENTS AROUND CITY SPONSORED BY UNIVERSITY, PARTICULARLY DEPARTMENT OF ARTISTIC EXPRESSION (DEXA). NEW SERIES OF COMMEMORATIVE POSTAGE STAMPS WAS ISSUED ON OCTOBER 9 CELEBRATING ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF REVOLUTION, INCLUDING LA VIGORIA SUGAR MILL, BAYANO PROJECT AND NEW TOCUMEN AIRPORT. ACTING FONMIN OZORES HOLDING RECEPTION FOR DIPLOMATIC CORPS AND RANKING MEMBERS OF GOP ON OCTOBER 10. AFTERNOON AND EVENING OF OCTOBER 11 WILL FEATURE PUBLIC DANCES AT TWENTY OR MORE LOCATIONS AROUND PANAMA CITY, AT WHICH GOP WILL BE REPRESENTED BY ALL MINISTERS AND HEADS OF MAJOR AGENCIES AND SERVICES FANNING OUT, ONE TO A DANCE. WHILE OCTOBER 11 ACTIVITIES IN COLON ARE BEING DE-EMPHASIZED IN FAVOR OF CROSSING TO PARTICIPATE IN PANAMA CITY RALLY, MOST PROVINCIAL CAPITALS AND MANY OTHER AREAS WILL HOLD RALLIES. WHILE NATIONAL GUARD WILL BE PROMINENT IN MANY OF THESE, THERE HAVE BEEN NO ANNOUNCEMENTS AS YET OF ANY STRICTLY MILITARY PARADES OR OTHER SIMILAR ACTIVITIES.

CONFIDENTIAL

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CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 PANAMA 06246 02 OF 03 102102Z

64

ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SAB-01 AID-05 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00

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INFO PANCANAL
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 3 PANAMA 6246

4. DURING THIS SAME WEEK, GOP IS ALSO CELEBRATING 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF "GESTA INQUILINARIA", A CIVIL DISTURBANCE/ RENT STRIKE SITUATION IN PANAMA CITY IN 1925 WHICH RESULTED IN INTERVENTION OF US TROOPS AT THAT TIME. ORGANIZATION OF CELEBRATIONS OF THIS EVENT HAS BEEN LARGELY ENTRUSTED TO LOCAL OFFICIALS OF SANTA ANA AREA OF PANAMA CITY, WHERE 1925 ACTION TOOK PLACE; CELEBRATIONS WILL CONSIST OF RALLIES, SPEAKERS, AND POPULAR EVENTS SUCH AS CONCERTS AND DANCES (PARTICULARLY BY CUNA INDIAN COMMUNITY, WHICH PLAYED ROLE IN 1925 EVENTS) AND TE DEUM AT SANTA ANA CHURCH. COVERAGE OF THIS EVENT HAS GENERALLY STRESSED PATRIOTIC AND POPULAR NATURE OF 1925 EVENTS; INTERVENTION OF US TROOPS HAS BEEN NEITHER IGNORED NOR UNDULY EMPHASIZED--IN SOME CASES, CIRCUMLOCUTIONS ARE USED, SUCH AS "IMPERIALIST TROOPS OF THAT ERA", TO AVOID ACTUAL USE OF TERM US.

5. MAIN THEME OF EDITORIAL COMMENT, EXHORTATION BY GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS AND RESOLUTIONS BY GOVERNMENTAL AND OTHER BODIES AND GROUPS HAS BEEN CELEBRATION OF HOLIDAY AS DEMONSTRATION OF SOLIDARITY OF PEOPLE WITH GOVERNMENT AND WITH REVOLUTION, AND OF SOLIDARITY OF REVOLUTIONARY GOVERNMENT, IN CONTRAST TO ITS PREDECESSORS, WITH ALL OF ITS PEOPLE.

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 PANAMA 06246 02 OF 03 102102Z

COMMENT HAS HIGHLIGHTED PARTICIPATORY AND CONSULTATIVE PROCESS THROUGH NEW INSTITUTIONS OF GOVERNMENT, PARTICULARLY JUNTAS COMUNALES AND LOCALES, BY WHICH PEOPLE ARE INVOLVED IN GOVERNMENTAL PROCESSES TO FURTHER THE DEVELOPMENT OF DEMOCRACY IN PRACTICE. ADDITIONAL THEME HAS BEEN CONFIDENCE IN LEADERSHIP OF GEN. TORRIJOS, AND WILLINGNESS TO CONTINUE TO FOLLOW AND SUPPORT HIM IN REVOLUTIONARY PROCESS. AS COUNTERPOINT, PRESS AND VARIOUS SUPPORT GROUPS HAVE DISCOURAGED VIOLENCE OR OTHER HOSTILE ACTS, RUMORS, DEFAMATION OF CHARACTER OF GOVERNMENT AND REVOLUTION, AND THEIR ACTIONS AND LEADERS, AS COUNTERREVOLUTIONARY AND COUNTER TO REAL INTERESTS OF PANAMA AND ITS PEOPLE. THROUGHOUT, GOVERNMENT HAS LAID CONSIDERABLE STRESS ON ITS CONCRETE ACCOMPLISHMENTS FOR PEOPLE AND FOR COUNTRY, SUCH AS BAYANO PROJECT AND OTHER SUBJECTS OF STAMPS (PARA 3 ABOVE).

6. CANAL ISSUE,--UNSURPRISINGLY IN VIEW OF STRENGTH OF POPULAR FEELING ON ISSUE--ALSO COMES IN FOR FREQUENT MENTION, SLOGANS AND BANNERS BEING PREPARED CONTINUE TO STRESS PANAMANIAN "LIBERATION STRUGGLE" FOR RECOVERY OF SOVEREIGNTY OVER ALL OF ITS TERRITORY. HOWEVER, GOP HAS CONTINUED TO

EMPHASIZE NEGOTIATION AS PATH TO ACHIEVE THIS. WE ALSO HAVE STRONG INDICATIONS THAT GN ARE MOVING MORE QUIETLY TO DISCOURAGE MOST RADICAL AND ACTIVIST STUDENT LEADERS AND GROUPS FROM INITIATING ACTIONS WHICH COULD LEAD TO VIOLENCE ON THIS OCCASION.

7. AS IN PAST YEARS, TORRIJOS HAS TOLD INTIMATES THAT HE HAS NOT MADE UP HIS MIND WHAT HE WILL SAY IN HIS SPEECH OCTOBER

11. WE HAVE NO INDICATION OF WHAT HE OR OTHERS MAY SAY REGARDING CANAL TREATY NEGOTIATIONS AT OCTOBER 11 RALLY. AS GOP TREATY ADVISERS ARE STILL DIGESTING RESULTS OF CLARIFYING SESSIONS BY US DEPUTY NEGOTIATOR, WE DOUBT THAT THEY YET KNOW THEMSELVES WHAT THEY WILL SAY. WE SPECULATE THAT THEY WILL PROBABLY NOT BE TAKING ANY NEW OR STARTLING INITIATIVES.

8. RUMORS OF ANNOUNCEMENTS ON OTHER ISSUES, AS IN PREVIOUS YEARS, ARE RIFE AROUND TOWN. THERE IS USUAL SPECULATION THAT PRESIDENT LAKAS IS ON SKIDS, PARTICULARLY IN VIEW OF CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 PANAMA 06246 02 OF 03 102102Z

RECENT PROMINENCE OF VICE PRESIDENT GONZALEZ; WE DISCOUNT THIS. ONE STORY HAD VIRTUALLY ALL CIVILIAN MINISTERS IN GOVERNMENT BEING REPLACED BY GN OFFICERS; THIS TOO WE DOUBT; ALTHOUGH APPOINTMENT OF ONE OR TWO GN OFFICERS CAN NOT BE RULED OUT. RUMOR OF CHANGES, PROMOTIONS AND RETIREMENTS

IN GN PROBABLY HAS SOMETHING TO IT. WHILE INDICATIONS OF CHANGES HAVE SURFACED (E.G. OFFICIAL RADIO COMMENTARY TRANSMITTED FBIS/PANAMA PA 090339Y), STRESS IS ON SOLIDARITY AND CONTINUITY OF REVOLUTIONARY TEAM AND PROCESS, WITH MINOR CHANGE, IF ANY, ONLY TO STENGTHEN IT, AND WE DOUBT THAT HOLIDAY WILL BE OCCASION FOR MAJOR PUBLIC SHAKEUP OF GOVERNMENT THROUGH WHOLESAL PERSONNEL CHANGES.

9. ON INTERNATIONAL ISSUES, WE CONSIDER IT POSSIBLE THAT TORRIJOS MAY ANNOUNCE A TRIP TO CUBA; HE HAS ANNOUNCED IN PRINCIPLE THAT HE WOULD BE GOING, OUTGOING NATIONAL ASSEMBLY PRESIDENT RAUL CHANG RECENTLY SPENT SEVERAL DAYS THERE, AND NO PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT HAS YET BEEN MADE OF WHAT LATTER WAS DOING OR TALKING ABOUT. GOP WILL PROBABLY ALSO CONTINUE PUBLIC POSTURE OF OPENING ITSELF UP TO REST OF WORLD, PARTICULARLY THROUGH RHETORICAL IDENTIFICATION OF ITS CAUSE WITH THOSE OF THIRD WORLD COUNTRIES. OFFICAL GOP STATEMENTS HAVE FOR MONTHS INCLUDED REFERENCE TO FORTHCOMING PANAMANIAN RE-ENTRY INTO UN SECURITY COUNCIL AS REASON MAKING DESIRABLE RELATIONS WITH ALL MAJOR MEMBERS OF COUNCIL, I.E. USSR AND PRC, WHICH ARE TWO MAJOR SOCIALIST COUNTRIES WITH WHOM PANAMA DOES NOT

HAVE SOME SORT OF RECOGNITION OR RELATIONS. THERE HAS BEEN NOMARKED INCREASE IN SUCH COMMENTARY RECENTLY; THEREFORE WE CONSIDER ANNOUNCEMENT OF INTENTION TO OPEN RELATIONS WITH ONE OR BOTH OF THESE STATES TO BE POSSIBLE BUT NOT PROBABLY. IN SUM, WE FORESEE A CONTINUATION OF RECENT PANAMANIAN POSTURE ON INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS, RATHER THAN ANNOUNCEMENT OF MAJOR NEW DEPARTURES.

10. FINALLY, SPEAKERS AT RALLY CAN HARDLY AVOID SAYING SOMETHING ABOUT DOMESTIC PANAMANIAN ECONOMY, WHICH HAS BEEN SUFFERING A RECESSION LATELY, IF ONLY TO CONTINUE PROCESS OF SEEKING TO RESTORE BUSINESS CONFIDENCE (AND THUS OBTAIN RENEWED INTEREST IN INVESTMENTS WHICH HAS BEGUN WITH SERIES
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 04 PANAMA 06246 02 OF 03 102102Z

OF MAJOR MEETINGS WITH BUSINESS LEADERS RECENTLY. IN THIS, GOP IS CAUGHT BY CONFLICTING PRESSURES; "POPULAR POWER" RALLY IS HARDLY FORUM TO ANNOUNCE PROBUSINESS SENTIMENTS, BUT MAJOR STATEMENTS IN OTHER DIRECTION WOULD SIMPLY SCARE BUSINESSMEN AND NEGATE RECENT EFFORTS TO REOPEN DIALOG WITH THEM. ONE RUMOR GOING ROUNDS IS THAT GOP WILL ANNOUNCE ANOTHER MANDATORY ACROSS-THE-BOARD WAGE INCREASE, BUT WILL DO THIS IN TERMS OF A FLAT DOLLAR FIGURE TO ALL EMPLOYEES (\$30 IS ONE FIGURE MENTIONED), RATHER THAN AS A PERCENTAGE, IN ORDER TO FAVOR LOWER-PAID WORKERS. THERE HAS ALSO BEEN PERSISTENT RUMOR IN LABOR MOVEMENT FOR PAST SEVERAL MONTHS THAT LABOR MINISTER MURGAS WOULD SHORTLY MOVE TO ANOTHER POSITION, POSSIBLY TO SUPREME COURT OR OTHER JUDICIAL POST. MURGAS, AND HIS MINISTRY, HAVE ALSO BEEN FAVORITE TARGET OF BUSINESS CRITICISM RECENTLY FOR ALLEGED PRO-LABOR BIAS IN ADMINISTRATION OF LABOR CODE, PARTICULARLY PROVISIONS RELATING TO TENURE OF EMPLOYMENT AND DISMISSAL OF WORKERS; HIS DEPARTURE IN ITSELF WOULD BE SEEN AS FAVORABLE ACTION BY BUSINESS LEADERS, REGARD-

LESS OF WHERE HE WENT. RUMOR FACTORY HAS HAD NO CONSISTENT VERSION OF WHO MIGHT SUCCEED HIM, BUT IF ANY FACES ARE TO BE CHANGED ON THIS OCCASION, HIS IS ONE MOST PROBABLE.

CONFIDENTIAL

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CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 PANAMA 06246 03 OF 03 102105Z

64

ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SAB-01 AID-05 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00

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FM AMEMBASSY PANAMA

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INFO PANCANAL

USCINCSO

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 3 OF 3 PANAMA 6246

11. COMMENT: OUR ASSESSMENT OF GENERAL CLIMATE AT THIS TIME IS THAT GOP AND ITS LEADERS ARE WORRIED ABOUT STATUS OF NEGOTIATIONS AND STATUS OF THE ECONOMY. THEY WILL TRY TO FOCUS ATTENTION ON ACHIEVEMENTS OF TORRIJOS' REVOLUTION, DURING OCTOBER 11 CELEBRATION. RALLY WILL BE BOTH OCCASION TO BOLSTER GOVERNMENT'S SELF-CONFIDENCE THROUGH DEMONSTRATION OF PEOPLE'S SOLIDARITY WITH IT, AND TO DEMONSTRATE TO WORLD UNITY OF GOVERNMENT, PEOPLE AND TORRIJOS IN ALL ASPECTS OF THE REVOLUTION. VIOLENT DEMONSTRATIONS OR ACTIONS, OR OVERTLY HOSTILE OR STRIDENT TONE TOWARD US, CANAL ZONE OR ANYONE ELSE WHICH MIGHT LEAD TO SUCH ACTIONS IN CROWD AS LARGE AS THIS ONE, WOULD NOT BE IN KEEPING WITH THIS IMAGE. STILL LESS IN KEEPING WITH IT WOULD BE ANY NEED TO USE FORCE TO SUPPRESS SUCH ACTIONS IF THEY SHOULD OCCUR. ACCORDINGLY, WE CONCLUDE THAT GOP WILL TRY TO KEEP LID ON RADICALS AND MAINTAIN FESTIVE AIR OF HOLIDAY. NEVERTHELESS, THE INCREASINGLY VIOLENT BENT OF ANTI-GOP STUDENT GROUPS AS EVIDENCED BY RECENT DEMONSTRATION AT US EMBASSY AND BRAWL BETWEEN PRO AND ANTI-GOP STUDENTS AT UNIVERSITY ON OCTOBER 8 (SEE FBIS/ PANAMA PA 091840Y; NO GN WERE INVOLVED, BUT SEVERAL STUDENTS WERE INJURED AND SOME DAMAGE DONE TO UNIVERSITY CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 PANAMA 06246 03 OF 03 102105Z

AUDITORIUM WHERE CLASH OCCURRED), PLUS REPORTS THAT STUDENTS ARE PLANNING ACTIONS TO EMBARRASS TORRIJOS ALL INDICATE THAT GN-G-2 WILL HAVE ITS HANDS FULL THIS WEEKEND TO AVOID EMBARRASSING OR VIOLENT INCIDENTS. THUS POSSIBILITY OF UNPREDICTABLE VIOLENCE OR HOSTILE ACTION IS PRESENT, ALTHOUGH CLEARLY GOP WILL SEEK TO AVOID

AND SUPPRESS SUCH OCCURRENCES.

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